



King County

Ron Sims
King County Executive

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

Mark Yango
Charter Review Coordinator

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3210
Seattle, Washington 98104

King County Charter Review Commission Governmental Structures Subcommittee

Briefing Paper – Qualifications for Assessor, Auditor, Elections Official and Sheriff Subcommittee Meeting #2 – Tuesday, November 13, 2007

NCOB, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Table of Contents

Status of positions in King County	1
General	1
Assessor.....	2
Sheriff.....	2
Elections Official.....	2
State law governing qualifications	3
Assessor.....	3
Sheriff.....	3
Elections Official.....	4
Position qualifications in other county governments statewide.....	4
Position qualifications in other county governments nationwide	5
Conclusion.....	5

Assessor, Sheriff and Elections Director Status of these positions in King County

General

In Section 630, the King County Charter sets forth qualifications for all county officers holding elective office and states that each shall be at least 21 years of age, a citizen of the United States and a resident and registered voter of King County. This provision also states that additional qualifications of the office of sheriff may be established by ordinance.

The issue of whether additional assessor qualifications should be imposed was raised in the last charter review process. One of the 1996-97 CRC's recommendations was to establish qualifications for the office of assessor. The proposed change to Section 630 read as follows:

Additional qualifications of the office of sheriff and the office of assessor shall be established by ordinance. (Ord. 12301, 5/28/96)

The council took no action on this recommendation.

Assessor, 4-year term (partisan)

Incumbent: Scott Noble

Mr. Noble was reelected to the office of County Assessor on November 6th of this year. This is his fifth term. In his comments to the CRC on November 25th, Mr. Noble said that he would be willing to assist the commission in developing qualifications for the elected position of County Assessor and would highlight real estate appraisal and statistical management as among the most important training and experience a County Assessor must possess. He noted, however, that the commission will want to coordinate the identification of qualifications with the Washington State Department of Revenue to ensure that the charter's provisions are consistent with Washington State regulations.

Sheriff, 4-year term (nonpartisan)

Incumbent: Sue Rahr

Ms. Rahr was elected Sheriff in 2005. Currently, she is asking the CRC to amend the charter to allow the person holding the office of sheriff to negotiate and manage labor agreements with all labor units employed by the Sheriff's Office. When Sheriff Rahr responded to questions from members of the CRC on September 25, she indicated that amending the charter to establish professional specifications for the position of Sheriff would be inconsistent with allowing voters to have free choice. It was her contention that she was more thoroughly vetted by the voters than she has been by any employer who has reviewed her performance during her law enforcement career.

Elections Official, appointed

Incumbent: Sherril Huff

On July 2, 2007, the King County Council confirmed Ms. Huff as the Director of Record, Elections and Licensing Services (REALS). Executive Sims appointed Ms. Huff as acting REALS Director in April 2007.

Ms. Huff's appointment followed an executive search conducted by an outside consultant. The position posting identified minimum qualifications for prospective candidates for the REAL Director:

- Seven to 10 years of progressively responsible experience;
- Three-to-five years in supervisory/leadership roles;
- Bachelor's degree in Public Administration or related field;
- History of continuing education and/or an advanced degree; and

- Demonstrated expertise in personnel management, labor relations, budget and fiscal monitoring, media/public relations, program development and evaluation, team building, managing multiple priorities, working in a complex management environment, oral and written communication, customer service, and negotiations and conflict resolutions.

With the passage of I-25 on November 6, the issue of an elected versus an appointed elections director will be left to the voters to decide in November 2008. It is worth noting, however, that regardless of whether this position is appointed or elected in the future, the county's Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee identified as a priority concern the need to "secure leadership of the REALS Division."¹ The report states that this position must be filled with experienced, well-qualified individuals. As such, members of the Commission have noted that the issue of setting minimum qualifications may be appropriately considered by the CRC irrespective of whether the director is appointed or elected.

State law governing qualifications

All candidates for elected office in Washington State must be resident electors of their districts (RCW 42.04). The definition of a resident elector is a citizen residing at his/her voter registration address.

Assessor

The County Assessor's activities are generally governed by the Department of Revenue. Those persons assessing real property in support of an assessor must be accredited by the department. RCW Section 36.21.015 sets forth qualifications for persons assessing real property, including persons acting as assistants or deputies to a county assessor. These qualifications include the following²:

- One year of experience in transactions involving, appraisal of and/or assessment of real property;
- Knowledge in repair and remodeling of buildings and improvement of land;
- Knowledge in standards for property appraisal; and
- Other standards established by the Department of Revenue

In addition, the Department of Revenue requires each candidate for accreditation to pass an examination. Finally, each accredited appraiser is required to complete fifteen classroom hours study in standards of appraisal practice and ethics³.

¹ King County Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee Annual Report, February 1, 2007.

² Revised Code of Washington Section 26.21.015: Qualifications for persons assessing real property – Examination – Examination Waiver – Continuing Education.

³ Chapter 458-10 WAC: Accreditation of real property appraisers.

Sheriff

According to Sheriff Rahr, the Washington State Sheriff's Association has been considering this issue. Currently, RCW 36.28.025 mandates that a person who files a declaration of candidacy for the office of sheriff "shall have, within 12 months of assuming office, a certificate of completion of a basic law enforcement training program which complies with standards adopted by the criminal justice training commission pursuant to RCW 43.101.080 and 43.101.160 A proposed amendment states the following:

No person shall be eligible to hold the office of sheriff in any county of this state unless he holds a certification as a peace officer issued by the Washington Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Sheriff Rahr supports state certification for the position of County Sheriff, because it incorporates the three most important qualifications:

1. Appropriate training and background;
2. No criminal convictions; and
3. A record of honesty.

In terms of years of experience, this factor may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Sheriff Rahr suggests that voters (if the position is elected) can make the determination about what combination of experience (i.e., years of law enforcement, years of leadership, and the specifics of supervisory positions) qualifies a law enforcement professional to serve as county sheriff.

Elections Official

The qualifications of elections officials are governed by the Washington Secretary of State and the Election Administration and Certification Board⁴. Each County is required to have at least two Certified Election Administrators on staff. To be certified, the candidate must attend a two-day orientation and pass a written exam. Once certified, elections administrators must maintain their certification with 18 hours of continuing education each year.

Position qualifications in other county governments statewide

The state's other 38 counties choose their elections directors by popular vote. Elections administration falls under the Washington Secretary of State and is governed by an Election Administration and Certification Board pursuant to RCW 29A.04.510. In King County, the county executive appoints the director, subject to council approval.

While the elections director need not necessarily be certified, as noted above, each county is required to have at least two certified election administrators on staff. RCW 36.22.220. Initial certification requires attendance at a two-day class. In addition, certification

⁴ Pursuant to RCW 29A.04.510.

requires passing a written exam that is administered pursuant to the requirements of WAC 434-260-260 and is designed to test knowledge of election law and to demonstrate the ability to locate answers in the RCW, the WAC or other pertinent source documents.

In our survey of 12 other Washington State counties, none had special qualifications for their assessor. Although Snohomish County identifies minimum qualifications, as in King County, these are indicated for any elected office:

Each county official holding an elective office shall be, at the time of appointment or election and at all times while holding office, a citizen of the United States over the age of twenty-one and a three year resident and registered voter of Snohomish County at the time of filing for office.⁵

Position qualifications in other county governments nationwide

Of the counties nationally that responded to a request for information, few identified specific qualifications for the positions of assessor, sheriff, or elections official other than meeting the residency requirement and being a registered voters in the county, which are set by state statute.

There were exceptions. For example, Los Angeles County identifies in its Candidates Handbook and Resource Guide (primary elections), additional qualifications for the position of Sheriff⁶ and states that candidates must meet one of several criteria or combinations of criteria, which include experience, certification, and education.

In addition, Maricopa County identifies minimum and preferred qualifications for its election official, which is an appointed position. These include:

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, or related field;
- Ten years related professional experience managing and running large elections including five years of supervisory and/or management experience;
- Master's degree in public or business administration preferred; and
- Certified Elections Registration Administrator preferred;

Conclusion

Most county governments within and outside of Washington State do not specify qualifications for their assessors, sheriffs, or elections officials. State laws and regulations set forth minimum requirements and designate oversight agencies or boards to implement provisions of existing laws and regulations. As discussed above, the previous CRC sought to add new language to the charter that would have required the council to establish through ordinance additional qualifications for the office of assessor.

⁵ Snohomish County Charter Section 4.30.

⁶ http://www.lavote.net/VOTER/PDFS/CANDIDATE_HANDBOOKS/06062006.pdf

The current CRC will need to determine whether it should replicate the work of the 1996-97 CRC in indicating the need for qualifications for assessor, sheriff, and elections director, as well as to what extent the charter should detail those qualifications. Members of the CRC may choose to look to professional associations, office incumbents, and executive search consultants to provide insight into the qualifications of the individuals that would hold these offices.

KING COUNTY, WA

To provide innovative, responsive and accessible records, elections, licensing and animal control services for the public, local governments, county agencies and business customers.

Director

Records, Elections, & Licensing Services Division

Salary: \$109,000 - \$138,000 (DOQ)

Excellent Benefits Package



King County

 Waldron & Company

KING COUNTY, WA

The Community

The greater King County-metro area is regularly recognized as one of the most appealing places to live in the US. With a diversified economy and a history of creating industry-leading companies (Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks), King County is poised for even bigger things.

Washington State is also regarded as an outdoor-lover's paradise. Recreational opportunities span the full spectrum from ocean beaches to downhill skiing, from world-class golf courses to hiking in ancient forests, from fishing and hunting to extensive nature preserves. Educational opportunities abound as well and Seattle is home to one of the world's foremost research universities and medical training institutions in the University of Washington.

Additionally, the world's largest charitable foundation is headquartered in Seattle, and cultural amenities include the Pacific Northwest Ballet, the Seattle Opera (McCaw Hall opened in 2003), the Intiman Theatre, the 5th Avenue Theatre, and the Seattle Symphony (Benaroya Hall opened in 1998).

The Division

The Records, Elections, and Licensing Services (REALS) Division of King County Government is organized into six (6) Sections: Administration; Elections; Licensing Services; Animal Services and Programs; Archives, Records Management and Mail Services; Recorder's Office. Each Section is headed by a Superintendent or Manager reporting to the Director. The Division budget for Fiscal Year 2007 is approximately \$27 million and there are approximately 180 Division-wide FTE's.

The Division is staffed by a group of dedicated, hard working individuals who possess and exhibit a strong sense of pride in the work they do.

The culture is accepting of change and progress, and the County organization in general encourages innovation, creativity and constant improvement at all levels.

REALS is one of the seven (7) Divisions that comprise the Executive Services Department. The others are the Office of Civil Rights, the Office of Emergency Management, the Office of Risk Management, the Facilities Management Division, the Finance and Business Operations Division, and the Human Resources Division. The Department is led by the County Administrative Officer, Paul Tanaka, and the selection of the new Director must be confirmed by the County Council.



Waldron & Company

KING COUNTY, WA

The Position

The Division Director has primary responsibility for ensuring and maintaining the County's compliance with various State and County regulations that govern the County's operational and administrative activities. Additionally, the Director is responsible for achievement of the Department's mission, vision and goals within the policies, guidelines, procedures and priorities established by King County as they relate to the Recorder's Office, Elections, Vehicle, Vessel and Taxicab Licensing, Archives and Records Management, Animal Control, Animal Licensing, and Marriage Licensing.

The Director advises the County Administrative Officer in setting policy and program direction for the Division. He/She serves as the County's representative on external, internal and intergovernmental committees and projects, and directs and oversees the provision of a wide variety of public services.

The Director has direct supervisory responsibility for all of the Division's supervisors and indirect supervisory responsibility for the remainder of the Division's staff.



He/She also participates in a variety of Division, Department and County groups and work teams, and provides leadership in the negotiation of labor contracts.

Issues and Priorities

The new Director must spend the time necessary to get up to speed on all of the Division's current initiatives, and quickly gain familiarity with recently published commission and taskforce reports and recommendations relevant to the Division. Additionally, he/she must form relationships with the Division's staff members, the County Executive, County Council members, peer Division and Department heads, and other leaders in the County organization, as well as political, civic, business and community leaders throughout the County.

The King County Council passed an ordinance to transition the voting process in King County to an all vote-by-mail system. By ordinance, this process must be in place in 2007 or 2008.

The new Director will be expected to quickly gain familiarity with the Division's current organizational and staffing assessments. He/she will play a leadership role in recommending staffing levels and structures for the future while enhancing an environment that already encourages employee growth and greatness.

One of the challenges for any public agency is the on-going advance of technology and how emerging technology impacts operations, efficiency, and public expectations. The REALS Director will play a significant role in shaping County policy concerning privacy issues, public disclosure, public access, and records management and maintenance.

KING COUNTY, WA

Funding has been approved for the 2007 budget to expand a successful pilot program of enhanced Animal Control Services to more King County cities. The Animal Services program currently contracts with 31 municipalities to provide basic animal control services. In addition, the Animal Services Program is in the process of evaluating the condition and suitability of current facilities and planning for future facilities needs.

The Archives and Records Management Section is in the process of scoping a major Information Technology upgrade and update project. This is anticipated to cost \$4 million and take about 4 – 5 years. The RFP should be completed and going out to bid in the near future.

The Licensing Services Section has three major initiatives or areas that will occupy the new Director. The first is a Wheelchair Accessible Taxicab initiative designed to provide more transportation options to people in need. The second is a re-examination of the taxicab license

Ideal Candidate Profile

King County is seeking a seasoned leader ideally with extensive experience working with elected officials at all levels of government (local, county, state, federal) who sincerely cares about good government and delivering high quality services to the general public. The successful candidate will possess highly developed management skills and take a collaborative, team-based approach to working with his/her peer managers. Additionally, due to the unique diversity of this Division's program areas, the new Director must be adept at moving between widely divergent topic areas. He/She must be flexible, adaptable and comfortable interacting with people from every strata of society, and be conversant in a broad range of issues.

Given a number of high-profile initiatives that this Division is undertaking, particularly in the Elections Section, the new Director must be able to work in an environment with a high level of public exposure and media scrutiny. He/She must be accessible and approachable for members of the general public, and be skilled in media, public, and community relations. Also, the new Director must hold and model high ethical standards, possess a high level of integrity, and engender trust with a variety of constituencies. He/She must be open and transparent in operating the Division, and provide complete and timely information to County leadership, the media and the general public.

As noted above, this Division is responsible for a broad spectrum of services for both internal (County) and external (General Public) customers and literally touches every household in the County. As such, the Director must be able to find the right balance to ensure that each Section gets the appropriate levels of attention and oversight. Further, the ideal candidate will have a track record of creating a culture that emphasizes both strong customer service and a continual push toward improvement and progress.



 Waldron & Company

KING COUNTY, WA

Minimum Qualifications

The competitive candidate will possess 7–10 years of progressively responsible experience with 3–5 years in supervisory/leadership roles. He/She must possess a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration or related field, and a history of continuing education and/or an advanced degree is preferred.

Candidates must have demonstrated expertise in personnel management, labor relations, budget and fiscal monitoring, media/public relations, program development and evaluation, teambuilding, managing multiple priorities, working in a complex management environment, oral and written communication, customer service, and negotiations and conflict resolution.

To Apply

Equal Opportunity Employer - All qualified persons will be considered for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, ancestry, sensory, mental or physical disability; or veteran status; or any non-job related factor.

Open until filled. Please send a cover letter and resume as soon as possible to:

Waldron & Company

101 Stewart, Suite 1200
Seattle, WA 98101
206-441-4144
206-441-5213 (fax)
info@waldronhr.com
www.waldronhr.com



 Waldron & Company